ATLANTA COMMUNITY NEWS

Gay center taps new director

Washington plans outreach 'to all the different GLBT communities'

by ANDY COLE

Craig Washington took over as head of the Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Center on Wednesday, ending a three month vacancy at the center's top job.

A New York native, Washington has lived in Atlanta since 1992, developing connections to a number of local nonprofit groups in that time. In 1993, he began working for AID Atlanta where, among other duties as a coordinator of HIV-prevention programs, he led outreach efforts to the African-American community. While still at AID Atlanta in 1997, he launched a gay-specific project, "Deeper Love," directed towards black men who have sex with other men.

From 1996 to 1999, Washington served as co-chair of Second Sunday, a black male discussion group. And more recently, he worked as director of Southerners on New Ground, a multi-racial progressive organizing committee based in Atlanta.

AGLC board member Dr. Donald Smith said Washington was chosen from among "quite a few candidates," because of his administrative and non-profit experience, and also his connections to different communities across metro Atlanta.

"We are particularly excited about [Washington's] connections to the African-American community, a community the center was not as well connected to as we would like," Smith said.

The center, which is entering its 25th year, drew criticism early in its development for allegedly being inaccessible to minorities and women. But in recent years, AGLC leaders say they have tried to address these concerns and to make the center more inclusive.

Jim Petty, the previous director who left the center last fall to take an academic position, made strides to overcome this perception by cooperating more closely with other local groups—a goal which Washington said he shares.

"Atlanta needs a community center that is open for and inviting to all the different GLBT communities," Washington said. But he declined to discuss specific strategies prior to his official start date.

"I think it's a matter of the work making the point," Washington said. "I understand and I respect historical perceptions of the center, but our intentionality of connecting will prove itself and speak for itself."

As his first priority, Washington wants to re-establish the center's place among the city's gay citizens. "It's important for us to make people aware that the center is up and running and is in the process of regrowth," he said. "I am excited about reconnecting with people, having conversations with people that have already been involved and bring in some new folks."

Towards this end, the center will hold a "volunteer soiree," open to the public, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Feb. 27. The same night, new members will selected for the 11-seat AGLC board, which currently has seven vacancies, according to Smith.

A major function of the AGLC—which is funded by a Fulton County grant—is providing testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, in addition to testing and vaccinations for hepatitis A and B. Testing is available from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday; and, in accordance with Fulton County policy, no one is turned away for financial reasons.

Additionally, the center staffs a help line; provides a safe, alcohol-free location for a number of support and mutual interest groups; and houses the largest collection of gay and lesbian literature in the South. Due to a need for volunteers, the phone line is currently only answered on Thursdays. Additional volunteers are needed to respond to calls each night.

INFO

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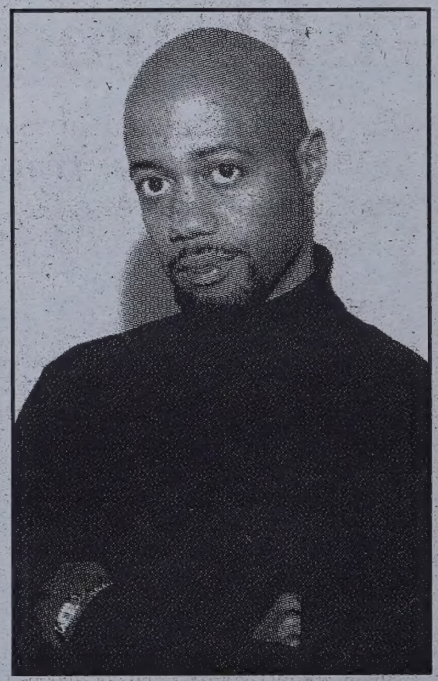
404-525-4357



'It's important for us to make people aware that the [Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Center] is up and running and is in the process of regrowth.'
—new AGLC Director Craig Washington

adam troy

Managing Partner, Omni Management Group

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They sure grow 'em big in Columbus, Ohio. First there's the mammoth Ohio State University, a sprawling campus that manages to absorb over 50,000 students. But also located inside the Buckeye state capitol is the largest African American-owned real estate development firm in the Midwest: Omni Management Group.

What managing partners, Adam Troy and Keith Key, began to see as they traveled north, south, east and west, was the need to incorporate real estate services along with other goods and services into their business portfolio, such as medical, health care, employment, and educational facilities.

"And real estate became a way for us to do that, not realizing at the time that we would be running a simultaneous track, which is what Magic [Johnson] has been able to accomplish on the national level. What he's been able to do on the retail front, we've been able to do in housing and commercial offices," shares Troy.

Both Key and Troy started off in banking before piercing the world of high finance via real estate development. And in six years, they've built a nationally-recognized full-service conglomerate that has been commissioned for work in Ohio, Atlanta and the east coast.

"That's what basically got us involved, seeing the need to bring into underserved communities, access to goods and services," he says. "We humbly claim the Midwest and that's only because next to us and Magic, there has to be somebody else out there that we're not aware of."

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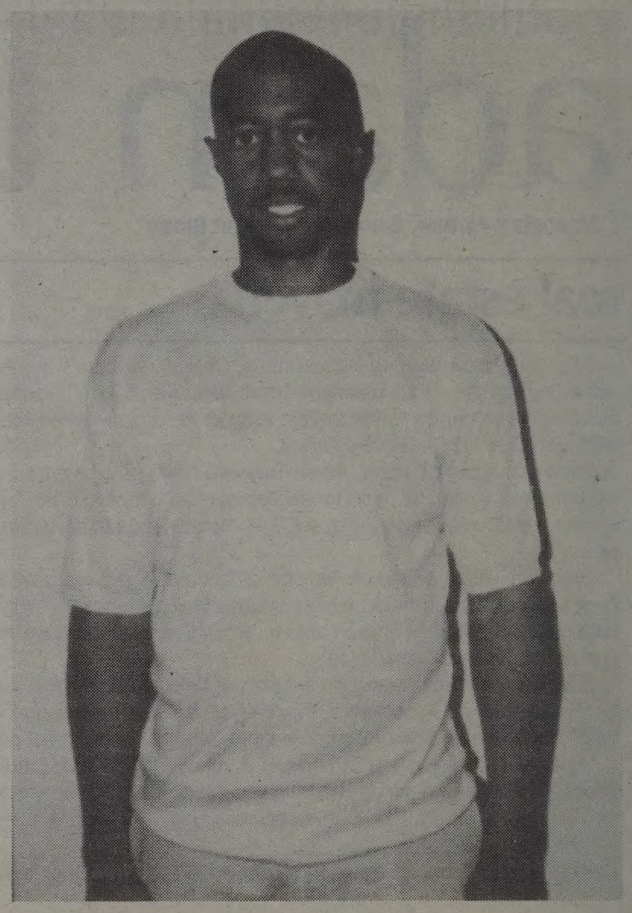

"When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid." –Audre Lorde

An African American woman, poet, lover and activist spoke those words. Although her life was tragically cut short by her own battle with cancer, her words live on through those to whom the torch has been passed.

Finding out one has an incurable disease or is terminally ill can have a devastating effect on the psyche. Enter Craig Washington. The New York City transplant has been living in Atlanta for 12 years.

Washington has a daunting task, however. "As volunteer training coordinator, I am responsible for recruiting volunteer therapists at Positive Impact," he says. "Positive Impact provides free individual and group counseling for people affected by HIV/AIDS." Regardless of this mammoth responsibility, he manages to wear a gleaming smile and assist clients and volunteers with open and sincere honesty.

The Atlanta-based organization is celebrating its 10th anniversary. Positive Impact was founded in 1993 by a group of community leaders who believed the impact of HIV on the mental health status of individuals merited special attention.

Positive Impact accomplishes its work through the energy and dedication of a team of mental health providers who volunteer their time to award mental health care to clients at no cost. Following an intensive intake and mental health assessment, clients are matched with a mental health provider with expertise in addressing the client's particular mental health issue. A majority of Positive Impact's clients are African American and represent a cross section of the city's demographics. *—tony binns*

For more information about Positive Impact, please call (404) 589-9040 or write them at 139 Ralph McGill Blvd. NE, Suite 301, Atlanta, GA. 30308.

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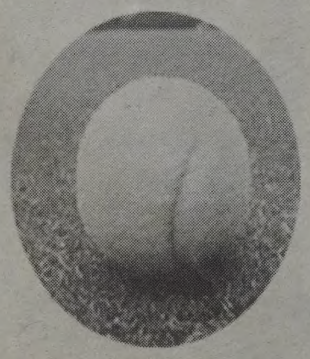

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Directions:
In a medium bowl, combine red wine, water, garlic, chile paste, white pepper and salt. Add beef and turn to coat evenly.
In a large heavy skillet over medium heat, fry 3 steaks for 2 minutes on each side; set steaks aside and drain liquids into the red wine mixture. Repeat with remaining beef.
Pour oil into skillet and reduce heat to medium-low. Fry steaks for a second time, 2 minutes on each side. Drain oil and return all steaks and marinade to the pan. Allow to boil for 2 minutes. 70
Recipe source: www.allrecipes.com.

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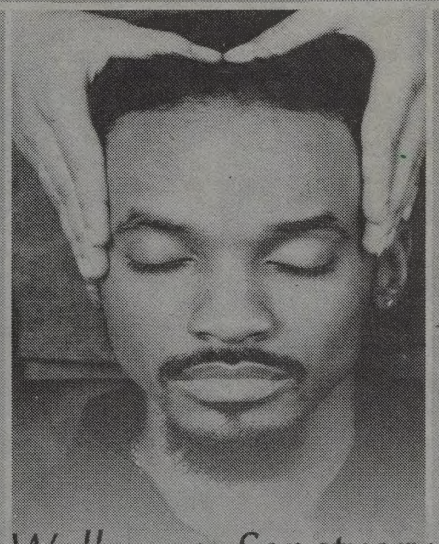

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Gays join Atlanta MLK day celebrations

Monday's holiday includes gay parade contingent, while a weekend 'service summit' will feature its first openly gay speaker

by JENNIFER J. SMITH

ATLANTA—For African-American gay men and lesbians, Monday's parade through downtown Atlanta celebrating the life of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. will have an extra layer of meaning.

"It's a powerful statement—a hundred or so black members of the LGBT community marching down historically black Auburn Avenue," said activist Craig Washington. "And they clap for us. They clap for everyone, but they clap for us, too."

INFO

MLK Jr. Service Summit
Jan. 13, 3:45 p.m.-5:15 p.m.
GSU Student Center House Salon
404-872-2252

MLK Day March
Jan. 15, 1 p.m.
Peachtree St., between Baker St. and Auburn Ave.
• Gay/AIDS contingent meets at corner of Peachtree St. and Ellis St.
404-526-8900

Washington, the newly hired director of the Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Center, and Mary Anne Adams, founder and director of the black lesbian group ZAMI, will serve as honorary grand marshals of the gay and gay-friendly contingent in the Jan. 15 MLK parade.

Last year's march included between 2,000 and 3,000 participants, including 50-75 people marching in the gay and AIDS service organizations contingent. This year, Washington said he hopes to increase the group to as many as 100.

Civil rights activist and event organizer Rev. James Orange predicted similar overall numbers for this year's march. "But I can only vouch for the five children I'm bringing. It's up to the rest of the organizers to bring everyone else," he said.

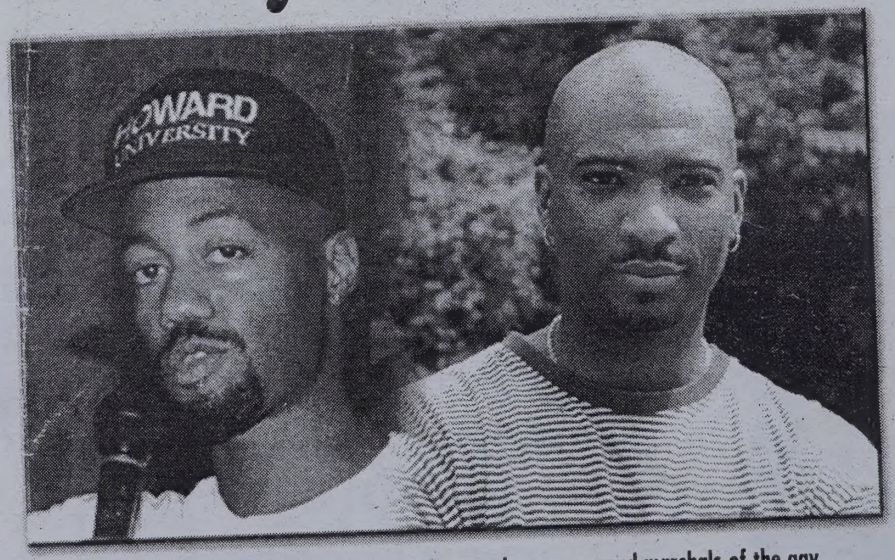
Washington said gay-related groups that have committed to participate include Unity Fellowship Church, Congregation Bet Haverim, the Georgia Stonewall Democrats and YouthPride.

"It's so incredibly important for us to put our bodies into people's struggles about social justice," Washington said. "It represents the kind of coalition building that can happen in Atlanta, which will enhance all of our movements. We're not really as separate as we like to think."

Earlier in the weekend, the eighth annual Martin Luther King Jr. Service Summit will add another stripe to its rainbow when Jimmie Scott participates in a panel discussion on Saturday.

Scott, an openly gay neighborhood activist, is the first known openly gay person to be invited to speak.

"I was so glad they contacted me for so many reasons," said Scott, "but primarily because in so many cases gay people are perceived as white males, and since this is the first time there was a gay person on the panel. I am glad I can dispel that myth."



Craig Washington (left) will join Mary Anne Adams as honorary grand marshals of the gay contingent in Monday's MLK Day parade, while Jimmie Scott (right) will become the first known gay person to address the MLK Service Summit.

The three-day summit—dubbed "Remember! Celebrate! Act!"—will explore King's message of service, activism, diversity and nonviolence. In the panel discussion, Scott said he plans to address how people are currently dealing with King's dream.

"We're at an amazing point in history," said the 31-year-old GSU public policy student. "I would like to see everyone come to the panel discussion because we're at a crossroads. We don't have to make the mistakes our parents made. We are capable of reaching across the lines that separate us, but we need to know how."

Scott, a board member for the statewide gay political group Georgia Equality, said he also hopes to promote the group's new people of color initiative.

Other workshops for the weekend center around five learning tracks, including King and the civil rights movement, economic justice, modern forms of discrimination and racism, "Violence: Origins and Solutions," and mobilizing service leaders.

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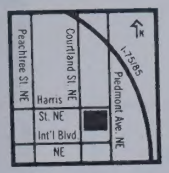

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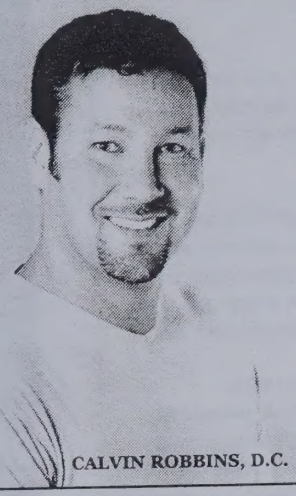

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SILENT SUNDAYS: Sunday was once a busy night for many of the ATL's gay bars, but a recent license crackdown continues to chip away at the nightlife 4

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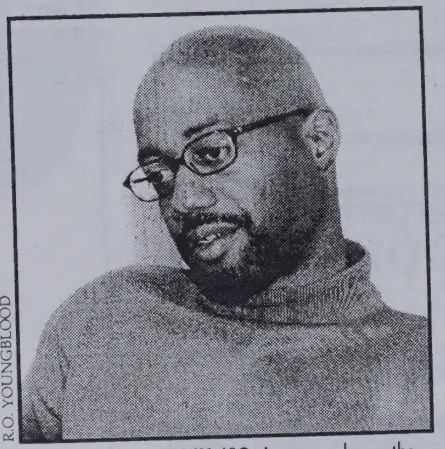

R.O. YOUNGBLOOD

IN WITH THE NEW IN '02: As gays welcome the year 2002, a handful of notable personalities like Craig Washington share their thoughts and hopes for the upcoming year 31

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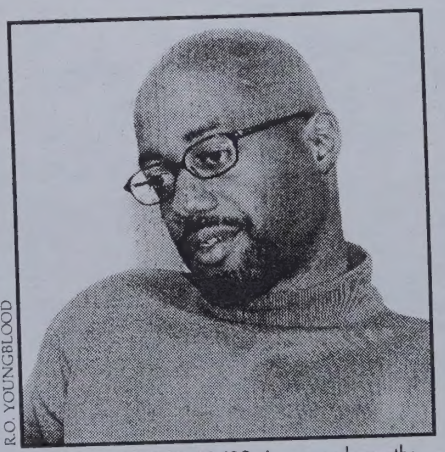

R.O. YOUNGBLOOD

IN WITH THE NEW IN '02: As gays welcome the year 2002, a handful of notable personalities like Craig Washington share their thoughts and hopes for the upcoming year 31

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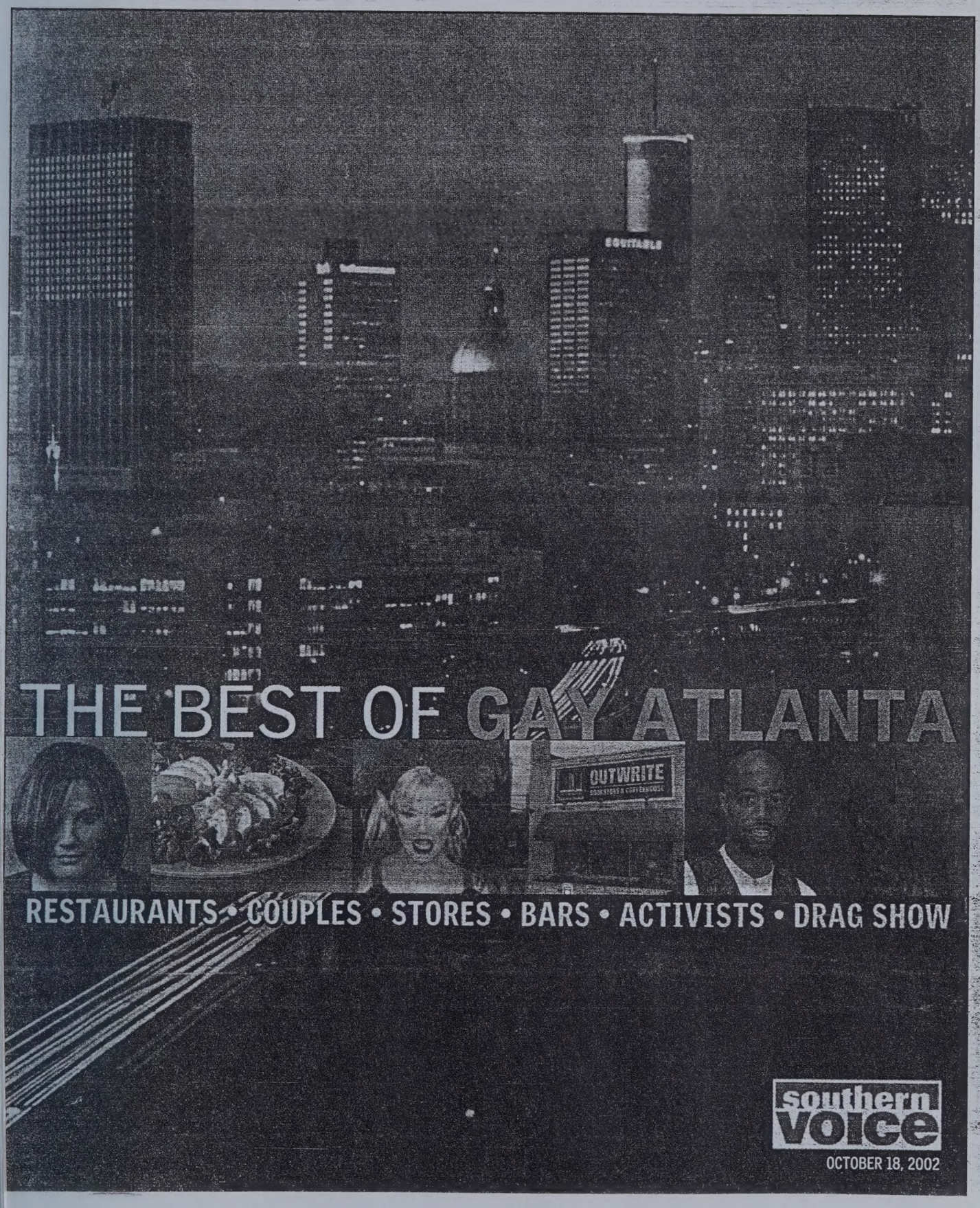

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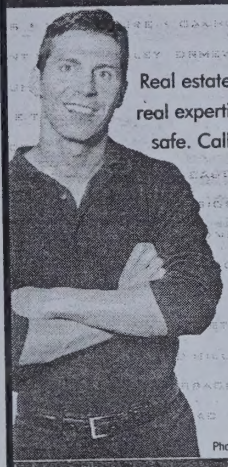
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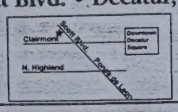

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best of gay atlanta

BEST, continued from Page 9

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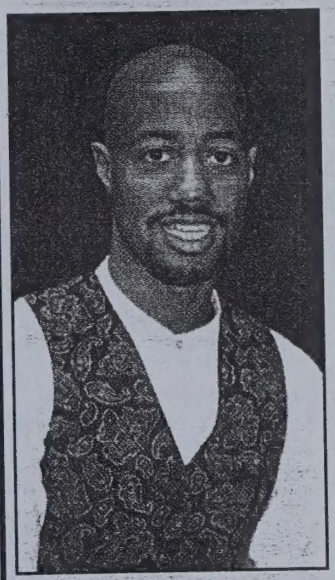


Craig Washington is at the forefront of gay activism.

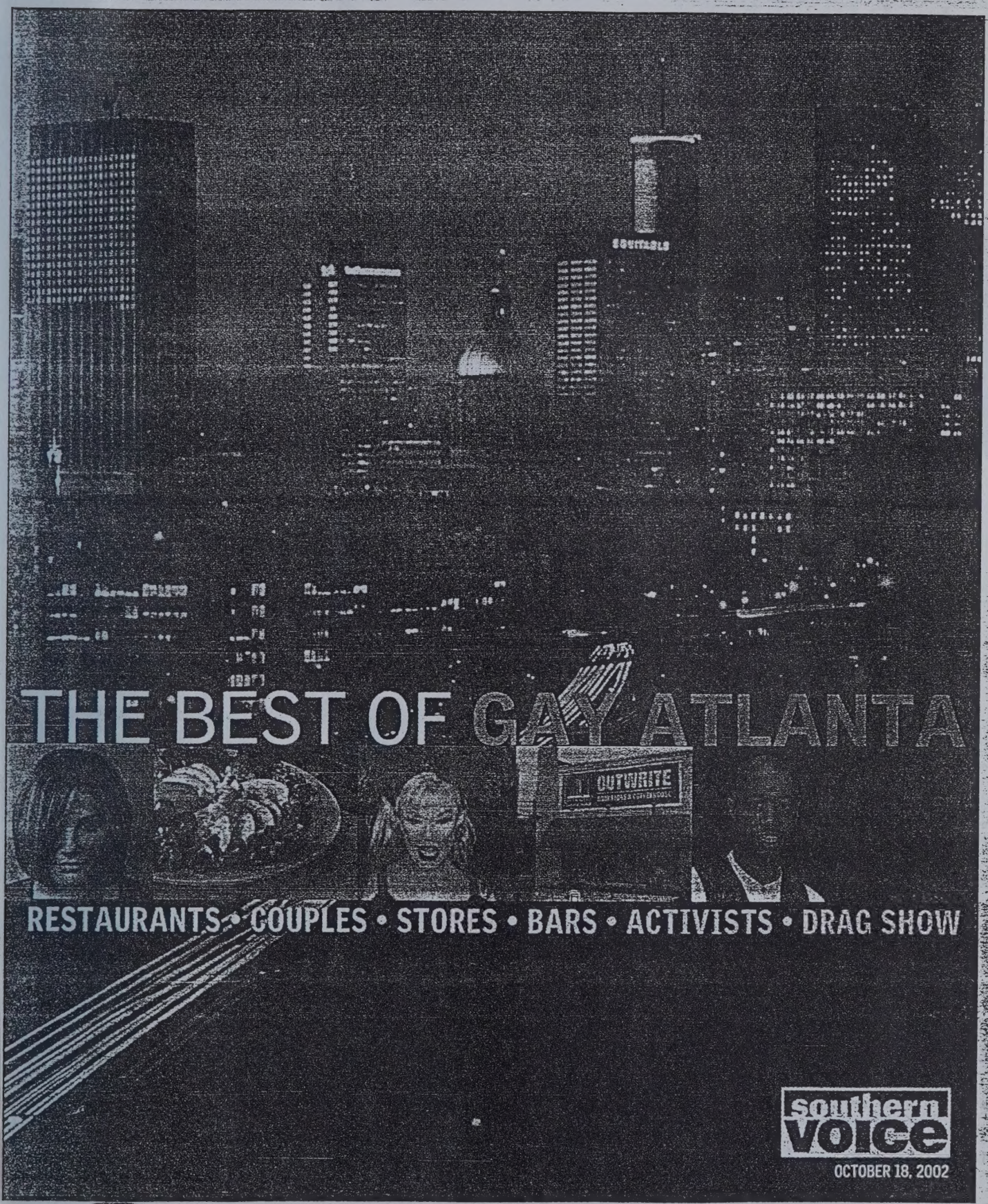
Local Hero: Male
Readers' Choice: Craig Washington
Editors' Choice: Jeff Graham

Coming in just one vote ahead of Georgia Equality Executive Director **Allen Thornell**, Readers' Choice Craig Washington epitomizes the strength of local gay leadership. Now executive director of Atlanta's gay and lesbian community center, Washington's career here has provided a lesson on building bridges: between women and men, black and white, young and old, and those with different HIV status. Next on our readers' list after Washington and Thornell was Enlight Atlanta founder **Steve Epstein**, who recently moved to San Francisco. Jeff Graham placed first on our editors' list, for fighting the good fight from his days as a street activist with ACT UP Atlanta to his career as executive director at AIDS Survival Project.

Dynamic Couple
Readers' Choice: Cindy Abel & Barbara Rubin
Editors' Choice: Kecia Cunningham & Lenny Lasater

Cindy Abel and Barbara Rubin, our Readers' Choice for dynamic couple, have been partners for more than six years. In that time, they've also made their mark

Please see BEST on Page 11



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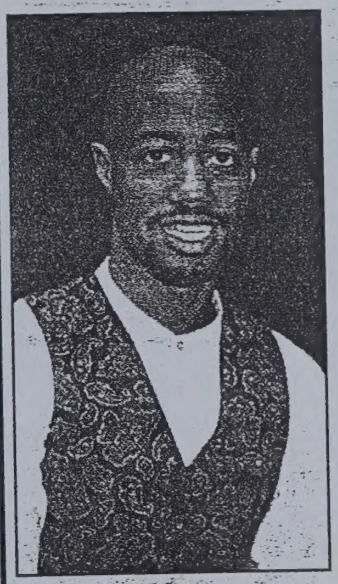

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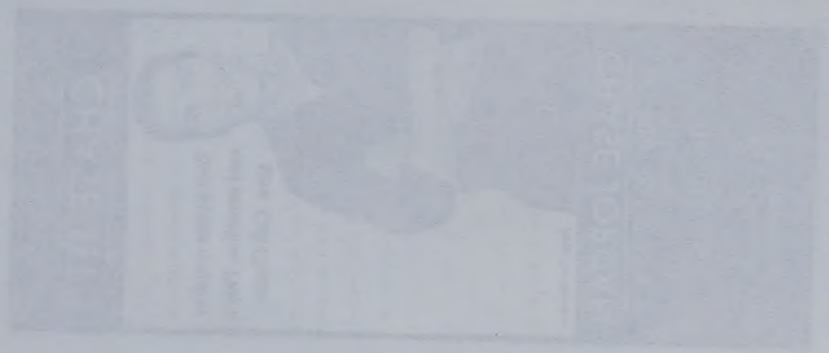


local news

Gay community center loses executive director

Health clinic, support groups still suspended in wake of move

By JENNIFER J. SMITH

The executive director of the Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Center announced his resignation last week, following rapidly on the heels of the Center's move to a new location in Midtown and the resignation of the nurse at the facility's health clinic.

"It was just time," said Craig Washington, who served as director for two years. "I had some things I needed to do to take care of me, and I couldn't do them at the Center."

Washington's final day at the Center was March 21. He said he gave about three week's notice, but the resignation was not announced publicly until the Center's March 22 annual meeting.

Washington begins a new job as volunteer coordinator with Positive Impact, a non-profit agency that provides counseling to people dealing with HIV, on April 1.

Bryce Smith, Positive Impact's clinical director and Washington's new supervisor, [illegible]

In February, the Center left its rental space at 159 Ralph McGill Blvd., to set up a permanent residence at a $460,000 house at 170 11th St. in Midtown, according Donald Smith, board chair.

An unnamed donor purchased the house and the Center is making interest payments on the loan until it can afford to buy the property from the owner, Smith said.

The Center's support groups were put on hold during the move, but should resume by mid-April, Smith said.

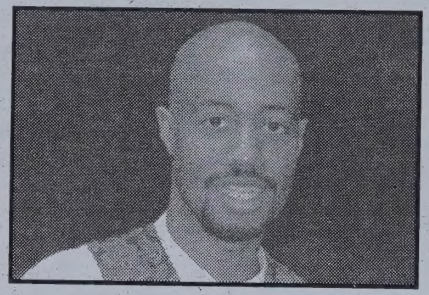
The facility's health clinic, which provides testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, is also "temporarily suspended," according to the Center's Web site.

Bill King, the health clinic nurse and the non-profit's only other paid employee, left the facility earlier this year, according to Washington.

The Fulton County Health Department funds both of the Center's paid staff positions in exchange for HIV and STD services provided to county residents, according to Smith.

Fulton County provides $45,000 a year for both positions — about half of the Center's annual budget of about $90,000, Smith said.

Washington said he received a salary of $31,000 for 30 hours per week, while King was paid $14,000 for his part-time position.



Craig Washington resigned last week as executive director of the Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Center in order to become volunteer coordinator at Positive Impact. (Photo by R.O. Youngblood)

"We pick our candidate and submit it to them," Smith said.

The Center plans to begin interviews for a new executive director in the next two weeks, Smith said. The board has already selected a new candidate for the nurse's post who is undergoing the approval process from Fulton County, he said.

Positive Impact declined to discuss Washington's new pay, but Washington said he was getting a larger salary and benefits — something he had long lobbied the Center to provide.

Smith said. "They're not really all connected."

But Washington's decision may be somewhat related to the move, Smith said.

"There were side discussions about how much more work would be demanded of the director with this big move, and since Craig had already expressed he needed more money and benefits, this was something he decided he needed to do for himself," Smith said.

As for the Center's nurse, King "has been with us almost a decade, and he's tired after giving up his nights on top of a day job for so long," Smith said. "He deserves a life."

Smith will also end his second term as board chair next month.

"But while we understand that this may appear like hurdles from the outside, from the inside we're actually going through a period of large growth and we're very optimistic," he said.

At least one board member, Lolethia M. Chapman, publicly expressed interest in running for board chair, according to Smith. Other Center board members include Dana Owens, Victor Barnes, Robert Vickers and Darlene Hudson.

MORE INFO

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MORE INFO

Happy birthday to DJ Tennessee on Jan. 27. "Best wishes, Sonny Jim. Love—George and Martha."

birthdays

"Happy birthday to Chris on Jan. 27. Love—J.T. and Mike."

Happy birthday to Ellen DeGeneres, who turns 42 on Jan. 28.

Happy birthday to Oprah Winfrey on Jan. 29.

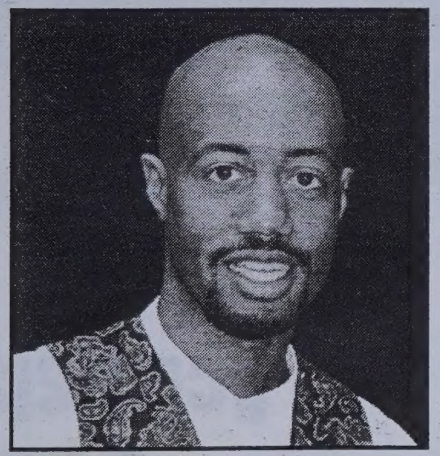
Happy birthday to "In & Out" star Tom Selleck on Jan. 29.

Happy birthday to stage star Carol Channing on Jan. 31

"Clay Calhoun wishes his husband Rob Calhoun a wonderful 31st birthday on Feb. 2. I love you, honey!"

Best wishes to the Atlanta Rainbow Trout members celebrating birthdays: "Princess" Lisa on Jan. 29; Alan G. on Jan. 29; Eduardo B. on Feb. 2; and Leah R. on Feb. 2.

Best wishes to the Atlanta Freedom Marching Band members celebrating birthdays: Nancy on Jan. 27; and Ray on Jan. 29.



Happy birthday to Craig Washington, co-director of Southerners on New Ground, on Jan. 30.

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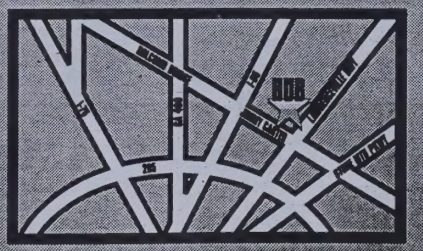

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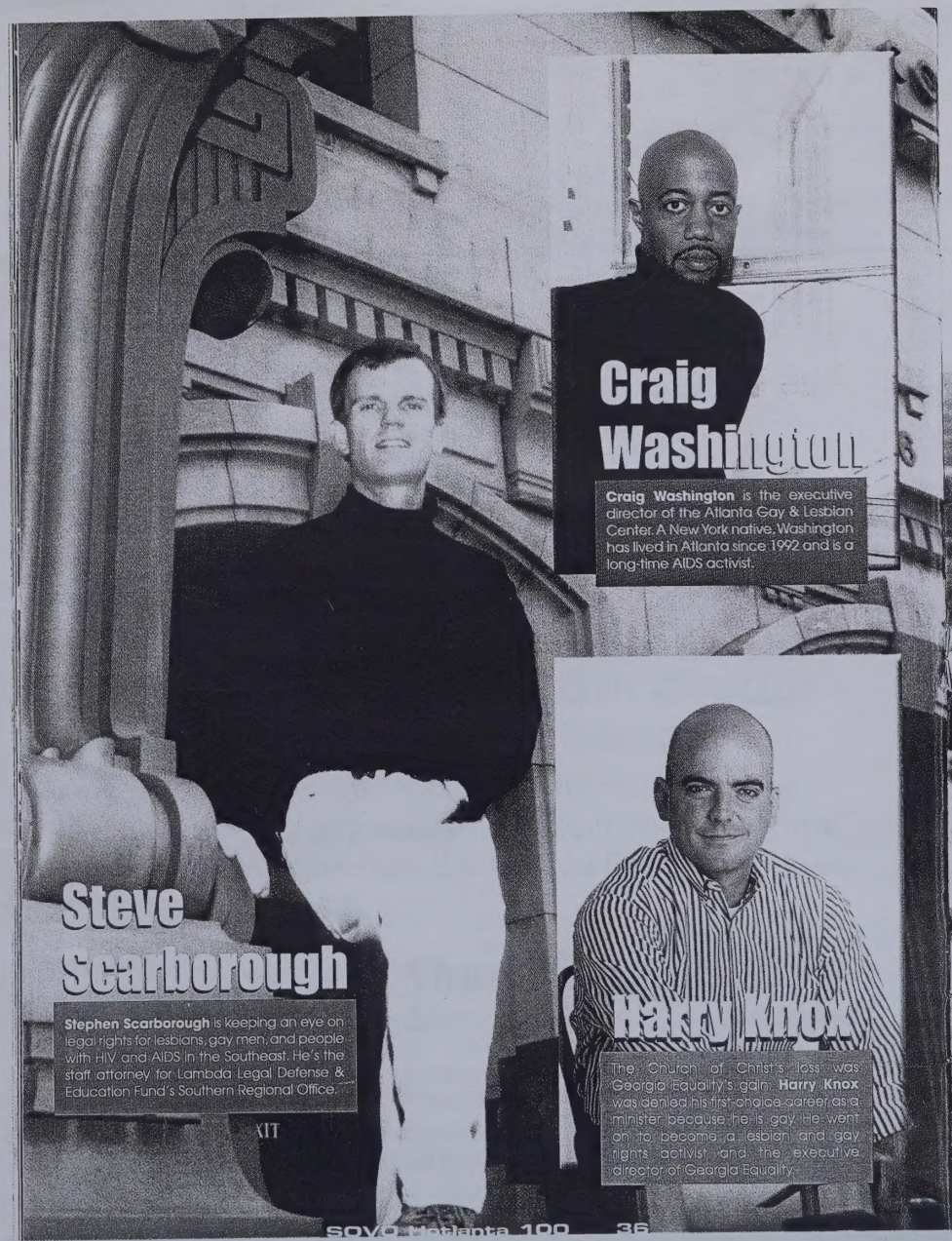


Craig Washington

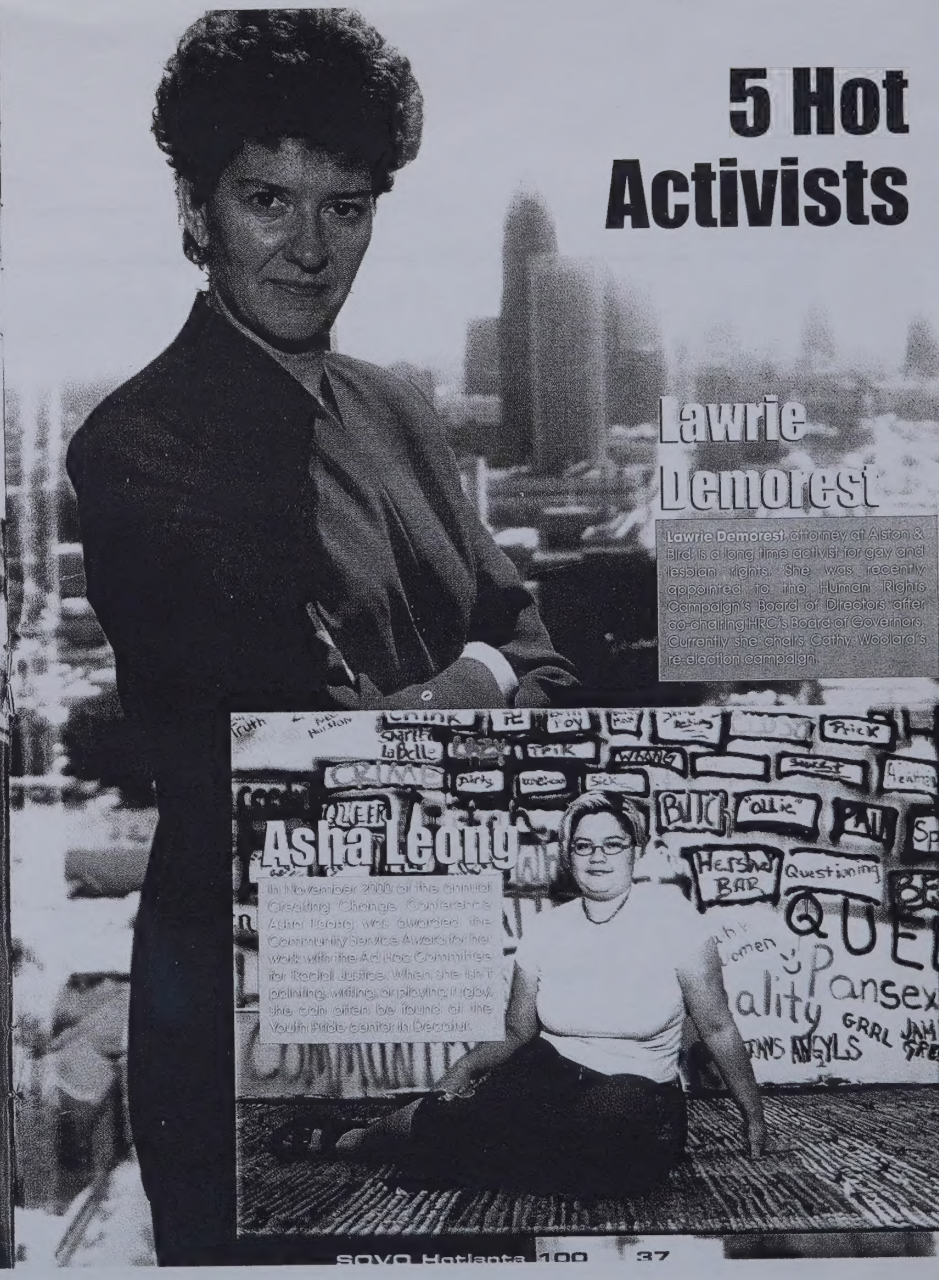
Craig Washington is the executive director of the Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Center. A New York native, Washington has lived in Atlanta since 1992 and is a long-time AIDS activist.

Steve Scarborough

Stephen Scarborough is keeping an eye on legal rights for lesbians, gay men, and people with HIV and AIDS in the Southeast. He's the staff attorney for Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund's Southern Regional Office.

Harry Knox

The Church of Christ's loss was Georgia Equality's gain. **Harry Knox** was denied his first-choice career as a minister because he is gay. He went on to become a lesbian and gay rights activist and the executive director of Georgia Equality.



Lawrie Demorest

Lawrie Demorest attorney at Alston & Bird, is a long time activist for gay and lesbian rights. She was recently appointed to the Human Rights Campaign's Board of Directors after co-chairing HRC's Board of Governors. Currently she chairs Cathy Woolard's re-election campaign.

Asha Leong

In November 2000 at the annual Creating Change Conference Asha Leong was awarded the Community Service Award for her work within the Ad Hoc Committee for Racial Justice. When she isn't painting, writing, or playing rugby, she can often be found at the Youth Pride center in Decatur.

Moving Our Community Forward

Craig Washington, Executive Director Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Center

AEN presents Mr. Washington as he discusses the need for Atlanta's gay and lesbian community to grow more cohesively, and how the Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Center can play a role.

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NETWORKING BEGINS: 5:45 PM
PROGRAM BEGINS: 7:00 PM
GUESTS: $20
MEMBERS: $10
STUDENTS: FREE